

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL

The California Highway Patrol is a law enforcement and traffic safety agency reporting to Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet and Governor Gray Davis.



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NEW TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS EFFECTIVE JAN. 1

SACRAMENTO – Helmet requirements for kids and impounds of street racing vehicles are among the new traffic safety laws that take effect Jan. 1, 2003, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Here are some of the California Vehicle Code statutes enacted during the 2002 legislative session that affect the safety of Californians on the roads and highways:

Helmets (SB 1924-O'Connell) requires anyone under 18 who operates a non-motorized scooter or skateboard, rides as a passenger on a non-motorized scooter or skateboard or skates on roller skates or in-line skates to wear an approved helmet. Currently, only bike riders must wear helmets.

Impounds (SB 1489-Perata) authorizes a peace officer to arrest the driver and impound the vehicle for 30 days of anyone determined to be engaged in a speed contest, exhibition of speed or reckless driving. The law provides for release of the vehicle prior to 30 days if the registered owner was not the driver or a passenger and was unaware of the vehicle's use.

Safety Seat Replacement (AB 1902-Reyes) requires auto insurers to replace child passenger restraint systems or reimburse the policyholder for them if in use by a child during a collision. Selling systems involved in crashes is prohibited.

Hazardous Waste Transportation (SB 1257-Murray) mandates that operators who load hazardous waste into a transport vehicle shall also be responsible for checking to ensure the driver has the proper class of license and commercial endorsement to transport hazardous materials. The bill also requires the load be locked and identified with placards. The CHP increased inspections of hazardous materials carriers after September 11, 2001 in the interest of homeland security.

Effective March 1, 2003:

Personal Mobility Devices (SB 1918-Torlakson) permits those people who ride electric personal assistive mobility devices to be classified as pedestrians and authorizes cities and counties to pass ordinances that regulate their use. An example of these one-passenger, two-wheeled devices is the SEGWAY.

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